

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 12, 2011

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Texas Water Development Board

Stephen F. Austin Building, Room 170

Austin, Texas 78701

MINUTES

Call to order

Chairman Bob Huston called the meeting to order.

Approval of meeting minutes from December 8, 2010

The minutes from the December 8, 2010 SAC meeting were approved.

Liaison Reports (San Antonio, Colorado, Nueces, Sabine, Trinity)

George Ward presented an update on the activities of the Guadalupe/San Antonio BBEST. He noted that the group was given a presentation on the Texas Instream Flow Program (TIFP) work being done on the lower San Antonio River and that the group discussed the data collected under that program. He also noted that the estuary subcommittee was looking at both motile and sessile organisms as indicator species. The group is in the process of bringing together individual assignments in order to complete their final report.

Ed Oborny presented an update on the activities of the Colorado/Lavaca BBEST. He noted that the BBEST has discussed the Framework for SAC review of BBEST work products which they found useful in providing direction as to how they might formulate their report. On the instream side, he noted that the group was relying heavily on the LCRA-SAWS Water Project and the data collected under that program. In the estuary side, the group was leaning heavily on the Matagorda Bay Health Evaluation study and the data collected under that program.

Paul Montagna gave an update on the activities of the Nueces BBEST. He noted that the group has adopted the SAC definition of a sound ecological environment, but that the group was debating whether current conditions are representative of a sound ecological environment. He noted that the instream work group was grappling with intermittent flow issues. The estuary subcommittee is struggling with the selection of indicator species. The BBEST will be participating in a field visit of selected sites prior to their next meeting.

Bob Huston gave an update on the activities of the Sabine/Neches SB3 groups. He noted that the BBASC had submitted additional comments and recommendations as well as comments on the proposed rules for their basin and bay system during the rule public comment period. The members discussed how to obtain comments on the proposed rules. Comments on the proposed rules can be obtained by contacting the TCEQ.

Fred Manhart gave an update on the activities of the Trinity/San Jacinto SB3 groups. He noted that the BBEST met in early December 2010 to prepare a draft work plan. This draft

was submitted to the BBASC who is currently reviewing and considering comments on the draft.

Budget Update

Ruben Solis, TWDB, gave an update on the budget expenditures by the SAC members. The members discussed potential budget cuts and agreed that the group should be prepared to make cuts to their budget if necessary.

Status of TCEQ rulemaking

Todd Chenoweth, TCEQ, gave an update on the status of the TCEQ rulemaking process for environmental flow standards for the Trinity/San Jacinto/Galveston Bay and Sabine/Neches/Sabine Lake Bay basin and bay systems. He noted that the public comment period on the rules had closed and that TCEQ was currently working on summaries of all comments received. He noted that the process was still on track for an April agenda date. The members would like to review comments on the Trinity/San Jacinto/Galveston Bay standards, which will be distributed to the group.

Overview of SAC discussion paper

Vice-chair Bob Brandes led a discussion on the SAC discussion paper entitled: "Consideration of Attainment Frequencies and Hydrologic Conditions in Developing and Implementing Instream Environmental Flow Regimes." He noted that much of the document was driven by what came out of the rulemaking process. The members discussed the need to provide a "tutorial" on this discussion paper which will include recent developments such as FRAT, etc.

White Paper on Market Approaches to meeting Standards

Member Mary Kelly provided an overview of the white paper discussing the use of market approaches to meet environmental flow standards. The members agreed that it would be valuable to have a thorough discussion of the economic issues related to environmental flows. Chairman Huston and Mary Kelly will speak with the EFAG leadership regarding this document and will then revise the white paper for discussion at future meetings.

Discussion of draft Workplan reports

Chairman Huston discussed the status of work plan development by the Sabine/Neches and Trinity/San Jacinto BBASCs and BBESTs, but noted that SB3 does not clearly say that the SAC must provide comments to the EFAG on workplan development. The members decided to postpone a formal review of the work plans developed under SB3 and agreed to discuss the draft work plans and the work plan development guidance at the February 2011 meeting.

Open Issues - Hydrologic Methods Guidance – 3rd Edition

This item will be postponed to the February 2011 meeting to allow members time to thoroughly review the revised guidance document.

Other Discussion Items

Members discussed the need to provide recommendations to the EFAG but agreed to postpone this discussion.

Update on the status of the Rio Grande and Brazos BBASCs

Gregg Easley, TCEQ, noted that both groups were set to hold their first meetings toward the end of January and that updates on their activities would be discussed at the February 2011 meeting.

Public comments

There were no public comments at this time.

Next Meeting – Schedule (Feb 9 - TPWD) and Agenda

The next SAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at TPWD headquarters.

Items for discussion include:

- Work Plan discussion
- Continuation of Market Approaches
- Liaison reports
- Rulemaking update, if necessary
- EFAG updates
- Discussion of comments received on TCEQ eflow standards

Adjourn